

Publisher's Preface

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

When we were first given the opportunity to undertake the publishing of the seminal work authored by Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi, on a very tragic and lesser-known aspect of Islamic history, entitled Baytul Ahzan – 'House of Sorrows', our immediate response was a resounding "yes"!

Already having published a book on the last and greatest Prophet for all of mankind, Muhammad b. 'Abdullah authored by 'Allamah Muhammad Husayn al-Taba'taba'i, and translated into English by Shaykh Tahir-Ridha Jaffer entitled "Sunan an-Nabi"; and following up that project with a comprehensive book on the last Imam and saviour of humanity, Imam al-Hujjat b. al-Hasan al-'Askari al-Mahdi entitled, "The Last Luminary and Ways to Delve into the Light" authored by Sayyid Ridha Husayni Mutlaq and translated by Saleem Bhimji [both books are available for review and purchase at www.al-mubin.org [1] or www.iph.ca] [2] – it was only fitting for our third major publication to be a magnum opus on the greatest woman to ever walk this Earth – a woman whom the Prophet of Islam described as being "The chief mistress of women of the entire universe – from the first to the last", lady Fatimah al-Zahra.

The author of this work, the late Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi took tremendous pains to write this book and quoted extensively from the most authentic narrations of Islamic history and sahih (reliable) traditions from both the Shi'a and non-Shi'a sources to ensure fair and balanced treatment of the topic at hand.

Thus, as you begin to read this work, one needs to first clear one's thoughts of all personal biases and 'blind love' for influential and leading figures in Islamic history, and be prepared to open the mind and heart to permit the painfully tragic events, which began just hours after the Prophet of Islam left this world and continue until this day in various ways and forms, to permeate one's heart and soul.

If this is not done, then the blood-stained pages of grief which recount the history of the family of the Prophet and his noble and loyal companions will remain as mere historical anecdotes, rather than serving their ultimate purpose of an inner change in one's life and character.

Within the circle of Islamic ideology, it is a known fact that the Prophet of Allah was always extremely careful in what he said and how he said it, and that his words were never due to personal sentiment or emotions nor due to family or cultural ties, and thus it should come to no surprise for Muslims to read how the Prophet elevated the status of his only daughter and subsequently through her, women in general – and this is important to remember when we reflect on the time in which the Qur'an was being revealed in which women were mere commodities that were bought and sold, with infanticide of baby girls practiced on a regular basis by numerous 'Arab tribes and many other cultural perversions.

Indeed it is only through studying the life of noble women such as the Prophet's first and most beloved wife, Khadijah b. Khuwaylid; the cherished daughter of the Prophet, Fatimah al-Zahra; and other notable women from amongst the family of the Prophet and his illustrious companions and the lofty rank that Islam has endowed upon them, that we see the power and forward-thinking nature of the teachings of Islam.

Since the translator has already done a comprehensive review of the status of women in various societies and dispensations throughout the world in his foreword, in our preface, we will focus our words on Fatimah al-Zahra and the legacy which she left for humanity.

Every year, millions of Muslims cry for Fatimah al-Zahra. There are a multitude of gatherings – both commemorations and mourning ceremonies in her memory. There are observances of praise, joy, and honour for her in which her noble characteristics are remembered, while Muslims also hold rituals of lamentation where they recount – in vivid detail – the painful events of Islamic history which led to her intense grief and eventual martyrdom. The faithful even go to the extent of invoking Almighty Allah to deprive those who hurt her from His Mercy and Blessings!

Despite everything which is recalled on the pulpits throughout the world and the articles and booklets which have been published so far about this great woman, the true history of her short life and the salient features of her personality are still unknown; however still, with the little that the Muslims know about her, they still accept Fatimah – her majesty and greatness – whole-heartedly. Despite everything which is recalled on the pulpits throughout the world and the articles and booklets which have been published so far about this great woman, the true history of her short life and the salient features of her personality are still unknown; however still, with the little that the Muslims know about her, they still accept Fatimah – her majesty and greatness – whole-heartedly.

The sphere of influence of Fatimah al-Zahra is extensive and she not only appeals and is a person of reverence for the Muslim community and whom only Muslim authors write about; rather her character, personality and visage actually transcend religion and the Muslim sphere.

In her recent work, *Chosen among Women: Mary and Fatimah in Medieval Christianity and Shi'ite Islam*, Mary Thurkill writes the following about the beloved daughter of Prophet Muhammad: In her recent work,

Chosen among Women: Mary and Fatimah in Medieval Christianity and Shi'ite Islam, Mary Thurkill writes the following about the beloved daughter of Prophet Muhammad:

According to early medieval Christian and Shi'ite tradition, God chose Mary and Fatimah as vessels for his sublime progeny. Mary, an obedient maiden gave birth to the God-Man Jesus; Fatimah, sharing in the divine nur, held the Imamate within her womb ... Theologians clearly relied on Mary and Fatimah to articulate and expand their respective orthodoxies and notions of rightness. By defining first their pure and immaculate nature, authors transformed Mary's and Fatimah's bodies into sacred containers ... Fatimah also served as a sacred vessel, holding the Imam's nur within her while simultaneously sharing it. Fatimah al-Zahra existed as the only female member of the holy family and, like her father, husband and sons, remained immaculate and infallible. Both Shi'ite and Christian authors also likened their holy women to an ancient container, Noah's ark; the women's wombs carried humanity's true salvation.

Mary and Fatimah served equally important functions in political and sectarian discourse. With such a rhetorical agenda in mind, hagiographers accented Mary's and Fatimah's maternal roles. These holy women, as mothers, effectively defined the limits of community and sectarian division. By symbolically adopting believers to their maternal care, Mary and Fatimah damned unbelievers to hell. Hagiographers advertised their holy mothers by describing their homey miracles and domestic skill. Both women experienced superhuman parturitions, multiplied food, and interceded for their spiritual offspring ... Fatimah, the mystical nexus of the holy family, rewards her adoptive kin who weep for her slain son, Husayn, and escorts women into paradise on judgement day.

Because these women (Mary and Fatimah) are both powerful in their own right yet intimately connected to domestic (private) space, they can be employed by authors for a variety of purposes. Mary and Fatimah can signify both female independence and agency and submission and chastity ... Whether in the seventh century or the twenty-first, Mary's and Fatimah's charisma affords scholars and religious alike an important symbol of community and religiosity that may be manipulated in various ways.

The holy women's attendance within the home subtly stresses the male households' presence and dominance. In the end, however, Mary and Fatimah – chosen by God as holy vessels and chosen by men as didactic models – manage to provide moral exemplars for women, promote standards of sanctity and faith, and chastise religious and political heresy. Within such legacies the domestic indeed complements public (masculine) authority and gains a place for feminine sanctity not easily ignored.¹

The Prophet of Islam , who speaks nothing but what has been revealed to him and is ordered to say by the Most High, has mentioned the following glowing tributes in regards to his beloved daughter: The Prophet of Islam , who speaks nothing but what has been revealed to him and is ordered to say by the Most High, has mentioned the following glowing tributes in regards to his beloved daughter:

On the Day of Judgement, a caller will call out, 'lower your gaze until Fatimah has passed.'²²²²

I am not pleased unless Fatimah is pleased.[3333](#)

The most beloved of my family to me is Fatimah.[4444](#)

The head of the women of Paradise is Fatimah.[5555](#)

Many men have reached completion, but no women have reached completion except for four: Maryam, Asiyah, Khadijah, and Fatimah.[6666](#)

The verse of purification (al-Qur'an 33:33) was revealed concerning five people: myself, 'Ali, Hasan, Husayn, and Fatimah.[7777](#)

Fatimah is part of me. Whatever upsets her upsets me, and whatever harms her harms me.[8888](#)

Fatimah is part of me, and whoever pleases her, pleases me.[9999](#)

Oh Fatimah, verily God is angry when you are angry.[101010](#)

These and hundreds of other Prophetic statements and numerous verses of the Noble Qur'an give us a glimpse into this great woman and oblige us to study her life and the legacy she has left behind.

It is indeed difficult to speak about the personality of Fatimah ; she is the role model that Islam wants all women to follow. She is a symbol of the various dimensions of womanhood. She is the perfect model of a daughter when dealing with her father; the perfect model of a wife when dealing with her husband; the perfect model of a mother when raising her children; and the perfect model of a passionate, strong, fighting woman when confronting her time and the oppressions in her society. Fatimah herself is a guide – an outstanding example of someone to follow, an ideal type of woman – one whose life bore witness for any woman who wishes to 'become herself' and to regain her own identity.

Her life was wrought with many difficulties: losing her mother when she was only five years old; being brought up by her father (the Messenger of Allah) who had the added responsibility of being the final Messenger of God; the physical aggression and mental torture which the polytheists wreaked on her family, friends and the believers; and ultimately, having to leave her birth-city of Mecca and migrate to a new home and community hundreds of kilometers to the north in the city of Madinah. Panultimately, she had to witness the death (or according to most reports, the poisoning and murder) of her father with the masses vying for political authority – leaving his lifeless body to take part in elections; and finally the rejection of her husband and his Prophetically and Divinely granted authority over the community by the majority of the Muslims; and tragically in the end, the physical attacks against her which resulted in her miscarriage and ultimately murder at the tender age of eighteen.

Fatimah ؑ lived like this and died like this – however after her death, she began a new life in history.

The repression and cruelty that Fatimah al-Zahra ؑ went through was not something that was

‘accidental’ or ‘unintentional’ – rather, every act of transgression against her and the Ahlul Bayt were pre-meditated acts of aggression.

Ziyarat ‘Ashura’, which is accepted as being a Sacred Tradition (Hadith al-Qudsi – revealed words of Allah to His Prophet which do not form a part of the Qur’an) states the following:

...فَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً أَسَّسَتْ أَسَاسَ الظُّلْمِ وَالْجَوْرِ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ

“May the removal of Allah’s blessings and mercy (la’n) be upon the individuals who laid the foundations for oppression and tyranny (to be inflicted) upon you Ahlul Bayt.”

This line, if carefully studied speaks volumes as to ‘who’ is responsible for not only the crimes inflicted on the Muslim community immediately after the death of the Prophet which are recounted in this book – but also all acts of oppression, tyranny, corruption, violence and terrorism which continue to be perpetrated today under the guise of Islam.

Scholars who have written upon Ziyarat ‘Ashura’ relate that the ‘individuals’ referred to in this ziyarat are two fold: the general community of Muslims at large who overlooked the rank and status of the Ahlul Bayt and deprived them of their rights, choosing and permitting others to take the reigns of caliphate; and on a secondary level, it refers to those individuals who were present at the event of as-Saqifah (which is detailed in this work) and were part and parcel of the usurpation of the caliphate from the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali b. Abi Talib . This group, which was made up of the Ansar and Muhajirin had no justification – neither from the legal code of Islam, nor from the ‘temporal’ law – to arbitrarily decide upon the fate of the entire Muslim community and appoint an individual to become the first caliph of Islam.

The reason it is said that the individuals who were at as-Saqifah and were altering the course of history are worthy of the perpetual damnation of Allah is that it is through their acts of tyranny and oppression specifically targeted against the Ahlul Bayt of the Prophet, they showed complete disregard for the commandments of Allah and His Prophet and through such reckless actions, every act of injustice that takes place on the Earth today lies squarely on their shoulders.

Had they permitted the orders of Allah to be carried out and the caliphate of the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali b. Abi Talib to manifest, the oppression against the Ahlul Bayt would not have occurred – including the events detailed in this work in regards to Fatimah al-Zahra, the tragic events of Kerbala, and even the atrocities inflicted upon the other Imams.

Indeed, the acts of terrorism and killing of innocent men, women and children throughout the world today under the guise of Islam would also not be happening had the political ramblings at Saqifah not taken place. (For an indepth analysis of what transpired in regards to these events, refer to ‘When Power and Piety Collide’ by Sayyid Mustafa al-Qazwini and ‘The Sacred Effusion’ by Muhammad Khalfan – both

can be purchased from www.al-haqq.com [3])

Therefore, we state with complete certainty that the people responsible for the first act of oppression and tyranny against the Ahlul Bayt deserve to have the eternal damnation of Allah , just as Allah Himself states in the Qur'an with clarity:

﴿...إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ﴾

“Indeed those who hurt and upset Allah and His Messenger will have the mercy and compassion of Allah removed from them, both in [this] world and in the next life...” (al-Qur’an 33:57)

What greater grief can one inflict upon the Messenger of Allah than to accost his daughter, make her suffer emotional and physical pain; cause her to have a miscarriage; force her to see her husband’s rights snatched away and plundered; see her husband physically abused and ultimately, lose her own life?

Therefore in the light of such tragedies, all of those who have suffered; all of those whose rights have been plundered; all of those who have been deceived and tricked – have taken the name of Fatimah ؑ or her beloved son, Husayn as their banner.

The memory of Fatimah ؑ grows through the love of the men and women who throughout the history of Islam, have fought for freedom and justice. Throughout the centuries, innocent people have been punished under the merciless and bloody lash of various governments. Their cries and anger grew and overflowed from their wounded hearts and this is why in the history of all spiritually awakened and knowledgeable Islamic communities, Fatimah has been the source of inspiration for those who want to reclaim their rights, for those who seek justice, and for those who resist oppression, cruelty and discrimination.

She was not just a wife to Imam ‘Ali; rather, Imam ‘Ali looked upon her as a friend – a friend who was familiar with his pains and his aspirations. She was his endless refuge, the one who listened to his secrets; the one who was the only companion in his loneliness. This is why ‘Ali behaved towards her and her children slightly differently than the wives he took after his beloved’s death and the other children that he fathered. After Fatimah died, ‘Ali married other women and he had children from them; but from the very beginning, he separated the children who were from Fatimah , from his other children – the latter were called ‘Bani ‘Ali’, (lit. the children of ‘Ali) while the former were referred to as ‘Bani Fatimah’ (lit. the children of Fatimah).

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In closing, we relate the words of the late Ali Shariati in his work, Fatimah is Fatimah:

I do not know what to say about her or how to say it? I wanted to imitate the French writer who was speaking one day in a conference about the Virgin Mary. He said, “For 1,700 years all of the speakers have spoken of Mary. For 1,700 years, all philosophers and thinkers of various nations of the East and West have spoken of the value of Mary. For 1,700 years, the poets of the world have spent all of their creative efforts and power in their praise of Mary. For 1,700 years, all of the painters and artists have created wonderful works of art showing the face and form of Mary. But the totality of all that has been said and the efforts of all the artists and thinkers throughout these many centuries have not been able to better describe the greatness of Mary than the simple words, ‘Mary was the mother of Jesus Christ.’

And I wanted to begin in this manner with Fatimah. I got stuck. I wished to say, ‘Fatimah was the daughter of the great Khadijah,’ but I sensed this would not fully describe Fatimah. I wished to say, ‘Fatimah was the daughter of Muhammad,’ but I sensed this would not fully describe Fatimah. I wished to say, ‘Fatimah was the wife of ‘Ali,’ but I sensed this would not fully describe Fatimah. I wished to say, ‘Fatimah was the mother of Hasan and Husayn,’ but I sensed this would not fully describe Fatimah. I wished to say, ‘Fatimah is the mother of Zaynab,’ but I still sensed this would not fully describe Fatimah. No, these are all true, and none of them is Fatimah – Fatimah is Fatimah.”

Some notes as you read this work

In researching and writing this work, the late Shaykh ‘Abbas al-Qummi has employed numerous references from both the Shi’a and Ahlus Sunnah scholars. The readers may sometimes come across numerous explanations in regards to a particular event – and at times, some of these diverse opinions may seem to contradict one another or may not be what the “official” Shi’a position is. It is at this point that one should keep in mind that the author is merely presenting the various opinions about what transpired after the death of the Prophet as have been recorded in various sources; and for this reason, he has relied on quoting and analyzing multiple reports before he arrives at his own conclusion, or as will be seen, he leaves it up to the reader to read the various report, and make up their own mind as to where the truth lies.

It is customary to offer a prayer for God’s peace and blessings whenever we mention the name of Prophet Muhammad , his family, or any of God’s prophets, angels, or saints. While in the past, we have used the diphthongs, “”, “”, “” and others to remind the reader to invoke these prayers, due to the nature of this work, we have omitted these markings. This decision should not be construed as a sign of disrespect to these great personalities. The only reason for leaving them out is to remove hindrance in the fluency of the text. In following with Islamic tradition, the reader is still encouraged to make his invocations while reading these names just as was done during the layout and editing of this work.

In closing, we first thank the Creator, Allah ﷻ for bestowing upon us the Divine providence (tawfiq) to be able to complete the publication of this work, as without His constant guidance and blessings, we would not be where we are today; and His support would not be there were it not for the intercession of

Prophet Muhammad and his noble family members – whom we pray that the Most High continues to bless and raise their ranks in Paradise and that they accept this noble publication as our humble attempt to keep alive their memory and teachings.

We must recognize the author of this work, the late Shaykh ‘Abbas al-Qummi for his untiring efforts to acquaint the Muslims with the life of Fatimah al-Zahra and for all of his other valuable contributions to the community – books such as Mafatih al-Jinan, Manazil al-Akhirah, Muntahal al-A’mal and many others.

We must also thank the translator, Aejaz Ali Turab Husain (al-Husainee) for his hard work in rendering this book into English and for his thorough and thought-provoking introduction. In order to truly appreciate the services of Islam and the teachings of the Prophet and the life and death of Fatimah al-Zahra on the world scene, we need to understand how other cultures, societies and religions view woman and then compare that to the model of lady Fatimah and the Islamic ideal – and he has done this in a very lucid and comprehensive style in the Translator’s Foreword.

We would like to acknowledge the support, encouragement and assistance of Sr. Arifa Hudda, specifically her review and careful editing of this entire book.

Last but not least, we would like to appreciate and sincerely thank the various private donors who generously contributed towards the publication of this work – without your continued support of our projects, this and many other works would remain unknown to the English speaking world.

Our sincere appreciation also extends to the non-Profit organizations and foundations that have assisted in the publication of this work (presented in alphabetical order). Please do consider volunteering your time or donating to these organizations so that they can in turn, further promote and assist in the dissemination of the faith of Islam:

Islamic Humanitarian Service

More information on the I.H.S. can be found at their website of www.al-haqq.com [3]

Mohsin and Fauzia Jaffer Foundation, Inc.

May Allah accept this humble effort from us in our attempts to educate the Muslim community on the greatest woman to ever inhabit the Earth, Fatimah al-Zahra .

Saleem Bhimji – Director of the Islamic Publishing House

9th Rabi’ al-Awwal, 1431 ah

‘Eid al-Zahra

February 24th, 2010 ce

¹. Chosen Among Women: Mary and Fatimah in Medieval Christianity and Shi’ite Islam; written by Mary F. Thurkill; Printed

by University of Notre Dame Press 2007; pp. 119–123

[2.](#) Kanzul ‘Ummal, v. 13, p. 91 & 93, Muntakhab Kanzul ‘Ummal quoted in the margin of al–Musnad, v. 5, p. 96; al–Sawa’iq al–Muhariqa, p. 190; ‘Usdul Ghaba, v. 5, p. 523; Tadhkirat al–Khawwas, p. 279; Dhaka’ir al–’Uqba, p. 48; Manaqib al–Imam ‘Ali of Ibn al–Maghazali, p. 356; Nurul Absar, p. 51–52, Yanabi’ al–Mawadda, v. 2, ch. 56, p. 136

[3.](#) Manaqib al–Imam ‘Ali of Ibn al–Maghazali, p. 342.

[4.](#) Al–Jami’ al–Saghir, v. 1, #203, p. 37; al–Sawa’iq al–Muhariqa, p. 191; Yanabi’ al–Mawadda, v. 2, ch. 59, p. 479; Kanzul ‘Ummal, v. 13, p. 93.

[5.](#) Kanzul ‘Ummal, v. 13, p. 94; Sahih al–Bukhari, Kitab al–Fadha’il, Chapter on the Virtues of Fatimah; al–Bidaya wa al–Nihaya, v. 2, p. 61.

[6.](#) Nurul Absar, p. 51.

[7.](#) Is’af al–Raghibin, p. 116; Sahih al–Muslim, Kitab Fadha’il al–Sahaba.

[8.](#) Sahih al–Muslim, v. 5, p. 54; Khasa’is al–Imam ‘Ali of al–Nisa’i, p. 121–122; Masabih al–Sunnah, v. 4, p. 185; al–Isabah, v. 4, p. 378; Seir ‘Alam Al–Nubala’, v. 2, p. 119; Kanzul ‘Ummal, v. 13, p. 97; similar wording is related in al–Tirmidhi, v. 3, Chapter on the Virtues of Fatimah, p. 241; Haliyatul Awliya’, v.2, p. 40; Muntakhab Kanzul ‘Ummal, in the margins of al–Musnad, v. 5, p. 96; Ma’rifat ma yajib li ‘ala Al–Bayt al–Nabawi min al–haqq ‘ala man a’dahum, p. 58; Dhakha’irul ‘Uqba, p. 38; Tadhkirat al–Khawas, p. 279; Yanabi’ al–Mawadda, v.2, ch. 59, p. 478.

[9.](#) Al–Sawa’iq al–Muhariqa, p. 180 & 132; Mustadrak al–Hakim; Ma’rifat ma yajib li ‘ala Al Bayt al–Nabawi min al–haqq ‘ala man a’dahum, p. 73; Yanabi’ al–Mawadda, v. 2, ch. 59, p. 468.

[10.](#) Al–Sawaaq al–Muhariqa, p. 175; Mustadrak al–Hakim, Chapter on the Virtues of Fatimah; Manaqib al–Imam ‘Ali of Ibn al–Maghazali, p. 351.

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